

IN THE CLAIMS

1. - 9. (Canceled).

10. (Currently amended) An agent for ~~regenerating damaged tissue, wherein the regenerating comprises the induction of~~ inducing terminally differentiated cells to divide, the agent comprising a fusion protein that further comprises,

- (a) the viral protein VP22; and
- (b) a protein capable of inducing the proliferation of terminally differentiated cells, and
wherein the protein capable is a viral transformation protein, and wherein the fusion protein induces terminally differentiated cells to enter the cell cycle.

11. (Previously presented) The agent of claim 9-10 wherein the protein capable of inducing the proliferation of terminally differentiated cells is SV-40 T-antigen.

12. (Previously presented) The agent of claim 9-10 wherein the protein capable of inducing the proliferation of terminally differentiated cells is a viral cyclin.

13. (Previously presented) The agent of claim 11 wherein the viral cyclin is the K or V cyclin of Herpes Simplex Virus.

14. (New) An agent for inducing terminally differentiated cells to divide, the agent comprising a fusion protein that further comprises,

- (a) the viral protein VP22; and
- (b) the SV-40 large T-antigen.

15. (New) The agent of claim 14, wherein the VP22 is connected by its carboxyl terminus, to the amino terminus of the SV-40 large T-antigen.

16. (New) The agent of claim 15, wherein the carboxyl terminus of the SV-40 large T-antigen comprises a hexapeptide of six histidines.

17. (New) The agent of claim 14, prepared by a method comprising the steps:

- (a) preparing an expression vector comprising a promoter region operably coupled to a polynucleotide sequence encoding the agent of claim 14;
- (b) contacting the vector with cells culture medium under conditions that effectively permit synthesis of the agent of claim 14, and
- (c) isolating the agent of claim 14 from the culture medium.